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ABSTRACT

An overview of educational goals adopted and legislative actions taken in 12 southern states is provided in this report. Individual states' goals and actions are outlined in terms of the most commonly identified goals: school readiness and performance; student achievement; dropout rate reduction; college readiness; and attracting, recruiting, and compensating quality faculty. States included in the study are Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. One table in the form of a matrix showing the common goals by state and explaning the legislative history of the goals is included. (LMI)

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Educational Goals

IN SREB STATES

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Educational Goals

IN SREB STATES

Gale F. Gaines

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SREB

Southern Regional Education Board

Educational Goals

IN SREB STATES

SREB states led the educational reform efforts of the early 1980s with comprehensive state programs to improve education. During that time, however, few states anywhere in the nation set specific goals for the improvements they expected from these programs. Again, SREB states are leading the nation—this time in efforts to set educational goals for the year 2000 and beyond.

Individual states and the nation are concentrating more on needed educational results than ever before. In October 1988, the Southern Regional Education Board's *Goals for Education: Challenge 2000* proposed 12 specific goals for education and indicators of progress toward achieving them. In September 1989, the president and the nation's governors focused national attention on goal-setting for education during the "Education Summit." By then many SREB states were well along in identifying the results they want to see from their improvement programs. While the goals vary among states, many are similar.

Identifying goals is only a preliminary step toward educational improvement; obviously states cannot adopt goals and stop there, expecting success. Educational improvements take time and continuous effort. Milestones must be set; progress toward meeting the goals must be assessed; and the public must be informed in straightforward terms to sustain the support necessary to achieve significant improvements.

Just as the goals adopted are diverse, so are the approaches that states have taken in identifying them. Some states have adopted comprehensive goals addressing both K-12 and higher education; in others, goals for K-12 education or for higher education have been set independently. These actions have also been initiated from a variety of sources. The legislatures in six SREB states (**Georgia, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee,** and **Texas**) have passed laws either setting goals or calling for the establishment of educational goals, and those in four other states (**Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana,** and **Virginia**) passed resolutions relating to goals.

As a result of legislative action, the **Tennessee** Commissioner of Education and the Higher Education Commission are each developing educational goals and objectives. The legislative resolutions in **Arkansas** led to the State Board of Education and the State Board of Higher Education *jointly* adopting a set of goals that address general, vocational, and higher education. Additionally, the state boards of education in three other states (**Georgia, Louisiana,** and **Texas**) have adopted goals either alone or as part of a long-range plan and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is including goals in its master plan.

Mississippi's governor has put before the legislature a plan that includes educational goals from pre-school through adult education. The governor's proposal seeks to build upon the 1982 actions in which Mississippi became the first state to pass a comprehensive education act. **Virginia**'s Secretary of Education and Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1989 recommended an "Agenda for the 1990s" that includes goals for Virginia's students. The **Maryland** State Board of Education has initiated a planning process that includes goals for 1992-1997. In 1986, **West Virginia**'s State Board of Education adopted "1990 Targets for Public Education."

The most common goals set by states are for:

School readiness;
School performance;
Student achievement;
Reducing the dropout rate;
College readiness; and
Attracting, retaining, and compensating good teachers and faculty.

Most of those states that have recently set goals are proposing that all children be ready for either kindergarten or first grade.

Most states, too, are calling for new or improved accountability programs in which school performance is regularly evaluated. Twelve states (**Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South**

Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and **West Virginia**) include goals relating to student achievement. Most call for students to meet or exceed national achievement levels, or be competitive with those in other developed countries.

The 12 states that have identified goals want to either reduce the dropout rate or increase high school graduation rates. **Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi, South Carolina,** and **Virginia** call for the dropout rate to be reduced by half. If **Texas** meets its goal, the dropout rate will be reduced over time to 5 percent. **Oklahoma** is aiming toward having 90 percent of those entering first grade graduate from high school. The goal in **Louisiana** and in **Tennessee** is to reach a graduation rate of at least 80 percent; **West Virginia**'s is 90 percent. **Georgia**'s goal calls for the provision of programs to meet the needs of at-risk students. The goal in **Maryland** is to significantly increase the number of students completing schooling through the secondary level.

There are now goals for college readiness in at least seven SREB states. The goals set in **Arkansas, Florida,** and **Oklahoma** call for 80 percent (100 percent in **Tennessee**) of students entering college to be ready to begin college-level work. **Mississippi**'s plan proposes a reduction in the number of students entering college who are not prepared to do college-level work. **Texas** requires colleges to report to high schools on student readiness to reduce the rate of underprepared students. The goals proposed for **Virginia** students include an increase in high school graduation requirements and in the percentage of high school students taking courses in algebra and the sciences.

Goals relating to teacher and faculty salaries are common to most states. **South Carolina** has met its original goal to raise its teacher salaries to the Southeastern average. The state will now focus its efforts on maintaining that average and continuing the Teacher Incentive Program that rewards teachers for superior performance and productivity. Both **Oklahoma** and **Virginia** have set goals to raise their teacher salaries to the national average. **Arkansas, Florida, Kentucky,** and **Texas** want their teacher and faculty salaries to be competitive in the marketplace. **Georgia's** goal is to implement career ladder programs with both group and individual incentives. The goals in **Maryland** and **West Virginia** include rewards or incentives for teachers and other school personnel. **Arkansas, Maryland, South Carolina, Tennessee,** and **Texas** have also included goals on increasing the number of minority teachers in the public schools.

STATES TAKE ACTION IN SETTING GOALS

ALABAMA

In 1988, the **Alabama** State Board of Education adopted 20 accountability resolutions to improve the educational system in the state. These resolutions require specific actions, such as establishing a performance-based accreditation system, conducting comprehensive assessments of local district educational programs, requiring local districts to develop and distribute annual reports on the status of education, and requiring that all local boards implement alternative school programs.

ARKANSAS

The **Arkansas** House of Representatives and Senate passed resolutions during a 1989 special session that requested the State Board of Education and the State Board of Higher Education to review the goals in SREB's *Goals for Education: Challenge 2000* and determine the feasibility of adopting goals for Arkansas. In response to the legislature's action, the State Board of Education and State Board of Higher Education jointly adopted a set of goals for the year 2000 that address general, vocational, and higher educa-

tion. These goals include:

Student achievement will be competitive with that of students in other developed countries, and schools will achieve the educational outcome-based objectives set by the state, the district, and the individual school.

The dropout rate will be reduced by 50 percent.

All schools will provide a safe and drug-free environment.

The state will ensure adequate funding so that all schools can meet state educational objectives regardless of the wealth of the community.

All graduating students will be ready to be contributing citizens. At least 80 percent will be academically prepared for postsecondary education and training.

Parental and business involvement in the schools will increase significantly.

85 percent of all adults, regardless of race, sex, or economic background, will have a high school diploma or its equivalent.

The number of minority professionals working in the education system will increase significantly.

All children entering first grade will be capable of beginning first-grade work.

Salaries for professional educators will be competitive in the marketplace and linked with performance standards and measures.

All professional school personnel will meet state standards for training and demonstrated performance.

The State Board of Higher Education and college and university officials will take the lead in cooperative efforts with Arkansas education, business, and political leaders to build greater public understanding for the value and importance of higher education.

The college-going rate will increase to the national average.

Financial barriers which limit access to higher education will be lowered significantly by increasing state funds for student financial aid, consistent with the 10 percent annual increase target established by Act 965 of 1989 for the State Student Assistance Grant Program, and by maintaining reasonable tuition levels.

The proportion of college students of all races who persist in their studies and earn a degree will increase to the national average for all students.

The percentage of two-year college students who continue their education at the university level will increase through effective transfer policies, articulation agreements, and financial aid programs.

The quality of higher education will be strengthened through review of academic programs and regular assessment of student outcomes and teaching effectiveness, using measures of quality that take account of the background and abilities of entering students, respect institutional autonomy, and recognize diverse missions and goals.

Closer working relationships will be developed between higher education and the public schools through institutional incentives that reward all faculty for participation in academic alliances and other forms of involvement with elementary and secondary schools.

Minority participation in higher education as students, faculty, and administrators will increase significantly through continuing commitment to the principles and practices of affirmative action, with regular monitoring of institutional progress.

Colleges and universities will strengthen their program offerings in math, science, the liberal arts, and technology to prepare Arkansans for successful careers in the work force.

In order to attract and retain qualified college and university faculty members, average faculty salaries will be increased to the average for the SREB states during the 1991-93 biennium and the national average by the year 2000.

University research capabilities will be strengthened through the provision of adequate funding and support staff resources to

permit Arkansas to compete successfully for external research grants.

The state will assure a high quality educational experience for students at state colleges and universities by providing sufficient state funds to meet nationally-recognized standards for library holdings, to acquire up-to-date research and instructional equipment, and to provide modern facilities.

FLORIDA

Resolutions passed by the **Florida** House of Representatives and the Senate during the 1989 session call for the state to set goals identical to the 12 goals proposed by SREB in *Goals for Education: Challenge 2000*. Additionally, the Senate passed a bill creating Accountability Program Grants to challenge high schools to improve productivity and meet student outcome indicators. The program involves the following statewide goals:

To achieve a graduation rate of 85 percent by 1992;

To achieve an annual dropout rate in high school of 4 percent or less by 1992;

To achieve a 95 percent promotion rate from grade to grade in grades 9 through 12 by 1992;

To have specific enrollment and completion in upper-level science courses as outlined in the law (for example, to have 20 percent or more of the high school students enrolled in and completing level 3 science courses);

To have specific enrollment and completion of upper-level mathematics courses as outlined in the law (for example, to have 15 percent or more of the high school students enrolled in and completing level 3 math courses);

To reduce annually the high school graduates who are enrolled in a degree program and are referred for remediation in mathematics, reading, and writing in public colleges and universities by 50 percent every two years.

A recent education summit in Florida concentrated on seven specific areas: School readiness, student performance, dropout rates, adult literacy, training for a competitive workforce, the supply of qualified teachers, and the establishment of safe, drug-free schools.

GEORGIA

Georgia's Quality Basic Education (QBE) Act of 1985 required the state and local educational systems to develop strategic plans for education. In response to this requirement, the Georgia Board of Education has adopted "Vision into Reality." The plan includes a mission statement, seven broad "strategic directions" where progress must be made to establish Georgia as an educational and economic leader by the year 2001, and more than forty "specific goals or strategies" that address the strategic directions. The seven broad areas involve strengthening human resources, curriculum and instruction, student support services, accountability, finance, the Department of Education, and the public's confidence in public education in Georgia. Strategies, or goals, within these areas include, for example:

Ensuring that an adequate supply of highly qualified personnel is available;

Adopting and implementing a statewide, core curriculum based on the Georgia Board of Education's required student competencies;

Developing and adopting a clear definition of at-risk students and providing programs to meet their needs;

Ensuring each school has a counselor and each school system a psychologist;

Recommending annually a base amount for QBE sufficient to provide quality education.

The State Board of Education, State Board for Technical and Adult Education, and the Board of Regents have recently announced that they will jointly develop comprehensive educational goals. It is anticipated that a set of goals for all levels of education will be adopted by the three boards in the spring of 1990.

KENTUCKY

In December 1988, the **Kentucky** General Assembly's Interim Joint Committee on Education endorsed a series of 12 goals and outlined the objectives toward achieving them, recent and proposed activities for advancing the goals and objectives, and the costs of the proposed initiatives. Nine of the Interim Joint Committee's goals were similar to those in SREB's *Goals for Education*. While this effort has been affected by the recent state supreme court order to re-create and re-establish the state's entire pre-collegiate education system, educational goals will undoubtedly play an important part in the new system.

LOUISIANA

In a resolution passed by the 1989 **Lousiana** legislature, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and the State Superintendent of Education were urged to include the goals set forth by SREB in the master plan currently under development. The K-12 plan recently approved by the Board includes nine goals for the year 2000:

All students entering the first grade will be ready for first grade;

Student achievement in the core curriculum areas will be comparable to national patterns;

80 percent or more of high school students will graduate with a regular high school diploma;

All teachers and administrators will perform at or above a statewide standard;

The effectiveness of classroom instruction will be improved by a series of overall system changes;

All students, regardless of location and size of school, will have access to instruction in basic and advanced subjects;

Financial resources will be provided on an equitable basis regardless of the local tax base;

Public understanding of the value of education will be increased;

School quality and student performance will be monitored on a regular basis.

MARYLAND

The **Maryland** State Board of Education is developing a strategic plan for public education, library services, and vocational rehabilitation for fiscal years 1992-1997 that is expected to be adopted in February 1990. The public education plan includes eight goals relating to equity, learning outcomes, accountability, personnel, school completion, achievement, parental involvement, and support systems for students and their families. Each goal in the Maryland plan includes objectives and measures of success for achieving the goal. For example, the objectives for the goal stating that the "education system will attract, develop, and retain high quality, well-prepared personnel" are to:

Recruit highly qualified and fully certifiable teachers to the profession;

Increase the number of ethnic minorities, with emphasis on blacks and Hispanics, in the educational profession;

Restructure teacher preparation programs;

Retain qualified educational staff and ancillary personnel.

The measures of success for this goal include:

An increase in the number of college students entering teacher preparation programs;

An improved rate of retention of beginning teachers;

An increase in the number of approved alternative programs to teacher certification;

The establishment of rewards and incentives for advanced teachers and ancillary professionals.

Most Common Goals Set by SREB States

	School Readiness	Student Achievement	Dropout Rate	College Readiness	School Performance/ Productivity	Salaries/ Retention
ARKANSAS Boards of Education and Higher Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FLORIDA 1989 Resolution	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
GEORGIA Board of Education	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
LOUISIANA Board of Education	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
MARYLAND Board of Education	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
MISSISSIPPI Governor's Proposal	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
OKLAHOMA 1989 Law	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SOUTH CAROLINA 1989 Law	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
TENNESSEE Commissioner of Education and Higher Education Commission	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
TEXAS Boards of Education and Higher Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
VIRGINIA Secretary of Education and Superintendent of Public Instruction	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
WEST VIRGINIA Board of Education		✓	✓			✓

The State Board of Education and the State Board of Higher Education in Arkansas jointly adopted a set of goals spanning from the readiness of children for first grade to the quality of higher education and literacy of the state's citizens. Other goals include increases in parental and business involvement in schools; drug-free schools; increase in minority participation as students and professionals in schools and higher education; increase in percentage of adults with a high school diploma or equivalent; closer working relationships between schools and colleges with incentives for faculty participation; increases to national averages of the proportion of students attending colleges and earning degrees.

The Florida House and Senate passed resolutions in 1989 calling for the state to set goals similar to the SREB goals. Legislation also established a program to challenge high schools to improve statewide target outcomes for students. The bill set goals for the state on graduation rates; dropout rates; increases in numbers of students taking upper-level courses; and decreases in students needing remedial education in college. A recent "education summit" called by the governor concentrated on school readiness; dropouts; student performance; adult literacy; supply of qualified teachers; and safe, drug-free schools.

The Georgia Board of Education developed a mission statement and broad directions as a response to the 1985 *Quality Basic Education* Act. Included are goals and strategies for adopting a statewide core curriculum, ensuring an adequate supply of qualified personnel, and programs for at-risk students. The Board of Regents, the State Board for Technical Education, and State Board of Education are developing a comprehensive set of goals to be adopted by all of these boards in 1990.

The 1989 Louisiana legislature passed a resolution urging that goals be set by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in its master plan. Additional goals adopted by the Board in the master plan include setting performance standards for teachers and administrators; increasing public understanding of value of education; encouraging access for all students to both basic and advanced instruction; and equitable funding for schools regardless of local tax base.

The Maryland State Board of Education has developed a strategic plan for 1992-1997 that is expected to be adopted in 1990. The plan has 8 goals that include equity; learning outcomes; personnel; parental involvement; and support systems for students and families. Specific measures include increasing retention of beginning teachers; increasing numbers of alternative teacher education programs; and rewards for teachers. The State Board of Education has recently called for the implementation of the recommendations of a Governor's Commission setting forth a plan for schools to be more accountable for performance and receive rewards or sanctions for standards that include graduation rates; student performance; and postsecondary attendance.

The governor of Mississippi proposed 7 goals for the state and they are being considered by the 1990 legislature. The goals in the *Mississippi BEST* plan also include having a 90 percent literacy rate for adults; reducing teenage parenthood; and a more internationally competitive higher education system. In addition to goals, the plan includes raising teacher salaries; rewards for high-performing schools; and innovative school structures to reach the goals.

The 1989 *Oklahoma Challenge 2000* Act set goals for education ranging from readiness to enter first grade to readiness to begin college work. The legislation also established an Oklahoma Indicators Program to measure school performance and report to the public on progress. The bill authorized a Task Force 2000 to address long-term improvement of schools. Recommendations from the Task Force have been translated into legislation now under consideration that addresses funding and quality of schools.

The South Carolina 1984 *Education Improvement* Act was among the first legislation aimed at specific results for schools. The 1989 legislation, *Target 2000-School Reform*, builds on the earlier efforts and sets goals and programs to reach the goals. Goals include basic skill gains for students in reading, writing, mathematics, and achieving higher order thinking skills. Also included are goals on better preparation of teachers, strengthened accountability for schools and districts, and expanded business and parent involvement in schools.

Tennessee set measurable goals for higher education and the schools in its 1984 legislation. In 1989, the legislature passed *Tennessee Challenge 2000* that requires the Commissioner of Education and Tennessee Higher Education Commission to develop goals for both K-12 and higher education. Annual reports on goals will be presented to the legislature. In addition to goals on adult literacy and a school curriculum by the respective boards to prepare students for the needs of the state's business and industry, goals for higher education include expanding and focusing the support of pure and applied research and public service; continuing to lead the nation in developing performance funding; increasing the number of Tennesseans who attend college and earn degrees; and to be competitive in faculty salaries in the national marketplace.

Among the first states to set goals for education (as a result of 1984 legislation), the Texas State Board of Education adopted a plan in 1986 that set goals for students, teachers and teaching, and parent and community involvement. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is developing a state plan based on six principles in *Texas Charter for Higher Education* (1987 legislation). Principles include access, quality, funding, and leadership. Goals include regularly assessing the quality of undergraduate programs, improving academic preparation of teachers, recruiting and rewarding outstanding faculties.

In 1989, the Virginia legislature passed a joint resolution endorsing SREB's goals and encouraging the Board of Education and districts to meet the goals. A report was issued in late 1989 showing school progress in the 1980s and proposing goals for 1990. Achievement goals including international comparisons were recommended as well as increasing enrollments in academic courses through technology where needed.

In 1986, West Virginia's State Board of Education adopted targets for 1990. Goals included increasing the percentage of high school graduates who enroll in postsecondary education and increasing the number of adults who receive high school equivalency diplomas. Other goals were set on parental involvement and school/community cooperation.

MISSISSIPPI

In August 1989, the governor of **Mississippi** proposed a new reform effort designed to build on the 1982 Education Reform Act. A set of seven educational goals for the state have been incorporated into proposed legislation for the 1990 session. These goals, contained in the Mississippi's BEST *(Better Education for Success Tomorrow)* Plan, specify that by the year 2001:

> Mississippi's people will be served by schools, colleges, or universities in which the performance of students is regularly assessed and is improving;
>
> All children will be fully prepared for kindergarten;
>
> Student achievement for elementary and secondary students must be competitive with students in other developed countries;
>
> The school dropout rate will be reduced by one-half;
>
> Nine out of ten adults will be functionally literate;
>
> The rate of teenage parenthood will be reduced by one-half;
>
> Higher education will be internationally competitive in selected areas, and will be more accountable for improved learning in all areas.

NORTH CAROLINA

The **North Carolina** legislature passed the School Improvement and Accountability Act of 1989 that creates the Performance-based Accountability Program. In implementing the program, the State Board of Education is required to adopt "guidelines for developing local school improvement plans with three- to five-year student performance goals and annual milestones to measure progress in meeting those goals." According to the law, indicators for measuring student performance may include attendance rates, dropout rates, test scores, parental involvement, and postsecondary outcomes. Local participation in the program is optional. Districts choosing to participate are required to establish goals that address those adopted by the State Board of Education.

In 1989, the Commission on the Future of the North Carolina Community College System, established by the State Board of Community Colleges, proposed an educational blueprint for the state's community colleges. The Commission's report stated that "the absence of strategic goals and of a reliable process for measuring and communicating program effectiveness contributes to a general lack of accountability." The Commission proposed goals for community colleges that include: An exemplary faculty and staff; effective learning experiences; educational advancement for all adult learners; expanded access to adult education; and flexible funding tied to performance. Specific targets include: Raise salaries to the top quartile of the Southeast by 1995; raise the percent of the operating budget devoted for faculty and staff professional development (increase to 2 percent by 1995); and increase the number of students making a successful transition from basic skills curriculum into jobs or advanced study. The recommendations in the report have been endorsed by the Board of Community Colleges and implementation is underway.

OKLAHOMA

The "**Oklahoma** Challenge 2000" Act, passed in 1989, established programs and requirements necessary to ensure that the following four basic goals are met:

> All children will be ready to do first-grade schoolwork when they are enrolled in first grade;
>
> At least 90 percent of students entering first grade each year will ultimately graduate from high school;
>
> At least 50 percent of the graduates of each of Oklahoma's high schools will have demonstrated mastery as seniors at or above national average levels of accomplishment;
>
> At least 80 percent of the graduates of each of Oklahoma's high schools will be fully prepared to begin college work.

The bill requires the development of the Oklahoma Educational Indicators Program to measure school and district performance in speci-

fied areas so that the public may be made aware of progress being achieved. The legislature also authorized the creation of a 27-member "Task Force 2000: Creating Twenty-First Century Schools" to address the long-term improvement of the schools. As a part of its duties, the task force was required to make specific recommendations for raising teacher salaries to the Southeastern average by 1995 and to the national average by the year 2000; make annual recommendations as to the funds necessary for meeting salary and other goals; and develop performance standards and indicators of progress for meeting specified goals. The task force's report and recommendations are being considered in a special legislative session that began in August.

SOUTH CAROLINA

South Carolina's legislature was among the first to pass legislation that aimed at specific results. The Education Improvement Act of 1984 both established goals and called for the State Board of Education to develop objectives for student achievement, teacher salaries, and exceptional performance. The 1989 "Target 2000—School Reform for the Next Decade," which was built upon the state's 1984 legislation, identifies educational goals and prescribes programs to support those goals. The goals are to:

Provide in the earliest stages of each child's educational experiences the best possible chance of success;

Make significant additional basic skill gains in reading, writing, mathematics, and science;

Reduce the dropout rate by 50 percent;

Emphasize greater understanding by students of a variety of subjects beyond basic skills in order to achieve higher order thinking skills and creativity;

Encourage productive and successful schools to initiate new and innovative ideas;

Continue to enhance the stature of the teaching profession;

Strengthen the accountability provisions at the school, district, and state level;

Create the environment for and develop programs that expand business and parent involvement in the schools.

TENNESSEE

Tennessee is one of the few states in the nation with some experience in setting measurable educational goals—1984 legislation contained benchmarks for all levels of education; strategies were developed to assess educational quality and to relate those assessments to state funding. It was also the first state in the nation to provide funding to colleges based on their performance. The performance funding model, implemented in 1979, allows institutions to earn additional money for achievement according to an approved plan. This history was continued when the 1989 legislature passed "Tennessee Challenge 2000," which requires the Commissioner of Education and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission to develop goals for both K-12 and higher education. The bill calls for goals to be presented to a special joint committee of the legislature for review. The committee will recommend to the State Board of Education for K-12, and to the State Board of Regents and the University of Tennessee for higher education, long-term quantifiable goals for adoption. The State Board of Education and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission will then establish policies and procedures regarding achievement and accountability. The Commission and the State Board of Education will present annual reports on the progress made in attaining the goals.

Both the Tennessee Department of Education and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission are drafting statewide educational goals and objectives required by "Tennessee Challenge 2000." The present draft of the Department of Education K-12 goals states that by no later than the first day of the 21st century:

All entering first-grade students shall be prepared to achieve at the first-grade level;

Every child who completes the third grade shall be able to read, write, and solve mathe-

matical problems effectively at the fourth-grade level;

Achievement levels of Tennessee students shall exceed the national average and be in the top one-third of the states in the Southeast;

The statewide high school graduation rate shall be at least 80 percent;

Teaching shall be a professional choice for a significant portion of the best and brightest graduates of the state's colleges and universities;

No less than 90 percent of the adult population shall be literate;

All students graduating with an emphasis in vocational education shall possess the competencies required to compete effectively in the job market within their geographical area of choice and/or to succeed in postsecondary technical education;

All local school districts shall be prepared to demonstrate conclusively improved performance and productivity;

All students admitted to state universities shall be prepared to begin college-level work;

A comprehensive approach to funding schools shall be in place and such an approach shall be linked directly to goals and tied to accountability standards for quality and productivity;

School-based decision making shall be the rule rather than the exception in all school districts of the state;

The Tennessee school curriculum shall be on the cutting edge of knowledge and fully responsive to the vocational and academic needs of all students as well as the employment needs of the state's businesses and industries.

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission is working with the University of Tennessee Board and the Tennessee Board of Regents in developing goals for higher education. The Commission's executive director has appointed a task force to prepare recommendations on goals for consideration by the Commission in April 1990. Areas being reviewed by the task force for possible inclusion in the higher education goals include:

Seeking to become one of the leaders in the South in terms of educational attainment and by striving to make substantial improvements in the number of Tennesseans who attend college and complete appropriate degrees;

Seeking to lead the nation in developing qualitative programs building upon the performance funding model;

Striving to prepare teachers with an effective teacher education program that places primary emphasis on the knowledge and performance of graduates;

Expanding and focusing support of pure and applied research and public service;

Planning to be competitive in the marketplace, thus competing nationally for faculty by having institutions that will attract and retain the very best minds;

Seeking to maintain a quality system of higher education that will merit continuing support by the state at the same proportion of state dollars currently being received.

TEXAS

The **Texas** legislature was among the first to require that goals be set for educational improvement. As a result of legislation passed in 1984, the State Board of Education adopted a long-range plan for 1986-90 that incorporated a list of eight goals, each with objectives and specific expectations for results. The State Board of Education is now in the process of developing the 1990-94 plan. The first goal is that "all students will be expected to meet or exceed educational performance standards." Results expected for this goal by 1990 include:

Statewide performance will increase an average of 8 percentage points relative to the national norm.

The percentage of K-12 students scoring 10 percent or more above the minimum Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills

(TEAMS) passing score will rise by 1 percentage point annually.

The existing gap in the passing rate between disadvantaged and other high school students of 14 percent on the exit-level TEAMS language arts test, and of 13 percent on the mathematics test, will be reduced to 7 percent in each.

Forty percent of the students passing TEAMS will meet board standards for mastering higher-order thinking skills.

All eligible pre-kindergarten-age students will be offered a pre-kindergarten program.

The statewide dropout rate (that is, the percentage of students who leave public school between ninth grade and graduation) will have been reduced by 11 percentage points from 35 percent to 24 percent. By 1997-98, the rate will have been reduced, as required by statute, to 5 percent.

The remaining seven goals included in the Texas public school plan relate to curriculum, teachers and teaching, organization and management, finance, parent and community involvement, innovation, and communications.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is developing a state plan based on six principles included in the "Texas Charter for Public Higher Education" adopted by the legislature in 1987. The principles center on access, quality, diversity, funding, management, and leadership. Goals for each principle are included. The Charter's principle relating to quality states that "The people of Texas expect quality in all aspects of public higher education: Teaching, research, and public service." The goals for this area are to:

Develop, recruit, retain, and reward outstanding faculties;

Adopt a uniform core curriculum and regularly assess the quality of undergraduate programs;

Provide systematic feedback to high schools on the performance of their graduates during the freshman year of college;

Improve the academic preparation of teachers.

VIRGINIA

The legislature in **Virginia** passed a joint resolution in 1989 endorsing SREB's 12 goals and encouraging the Board of Education and local school districts to meet those goals. Virginia's Secretary of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction prepared a report outlining the progress made in improving public schools during the 1980s and setting forth the following goals for Virginia's students in the 1990s:

Provide early childhood development programs to all "at-risk" children so that all children will be prepared to begin school.

Improve student achievement in all subjects and grades, which now exceeds national averages, to levels that equal or exceed the 60th percentile, and to equal or exceed those of other countries.

Require that every high school provide Advanced Placement courses for college credit and, where practical, dual enrollment in college courses.

Decrease the school dropout rate by one-half, with the result that 9 out of 10 students who begin high school receive a diploma.

Increase high school graduation requirements to establish a standard of academic excellence for all students by allowing students to choose between only two approaches: An advanced academic studies diploma with 24 prescribed course requirements, or the applied (vocational) academic diploma with 24 prescribed course requirements. This would increase the percentage of students who complete a vocational program or an advanced academic studies program from the current 64 percent to 100 percent.

Increase the percentage of students taking algebra or applied algebra in grades 8-12 from the current 29 percent to 100 percent.

Increase the percentage of high school students taking at least three years of science or applied science from the current rate of about 50 percent to 100 percent.

Provide, using satellite transmission where appropriate, all Virginia's students with the full range of courses necessary to meet their needs and reach their potential.

Extend to every qualified Virginia student the opportunity to enroll in an enriched full-time or summer magnet school program.

The report also addresses teacher preparation, dropout prevention, school accountability, rewarding teachers, and college readiness.

WEST VIRGINIA

In March 1986, the **West Virginia** Board of Education adopted the "1990 Targets for Public Education in West Virginia" after conducting meetings around the state to determine what was expected of its education system through the end of the decade. The adopted goals related to student achievement, parental involvement, curriculum, educational staff, and school/community cooperation. For example, student achievement goals included:

The average achievement test score on total basic skills statewide will be at or above the 65th percentile in each grade tested;

The percentage of high school graduates who enroll in postsecondary educational programs will increase from 28 to 45 percent;

Average daily attendance will increase from 92 to 96 percent;

The percentage of students who graduate from high school will increase from 80.6 percent to 90 percent;

The number of high school equivalency diplomas issued to adults each year will increase from 5,000 to 7,000.

THE CHALLENGE AHEAD

Significant improvements in education do not "just happen." They are planned, pursued, and evaluated. If the number of students graduating from high school increases appreciably or if there is a rise in the percentage of entering college students who are ready for college-level work, it will be because these matters are priorities.

Educational improvement in any state is a long-term proposition. Substantial and sustained public support is required. The success of our nation's educational system is like that of the nation's economy—they both depend in large measure upon public confidence. When the public's confidence in the economy is high, consumer purchases and business investment plans reflect this confidence. When the public's confidence in its educational system is strong, this confidence should be shown in financial support for education. Setting and pursuing educational goals may be the best way to encourage and maintain this support.

Attempting to rally support from the public with general claims that schools and colleges are working harder or doing better will not suffice. States without specific goals for the year 2000 may likely remember the 1980s "as the good old days in education." States with educational visions and goals specifically tied to these visions may remember the 1980s as the time they laid the groundwork for their continuing prosperity.